171

The Van Rysselberghes, the Jean Schlumbergers, Gheon, and I come out of the Schola (Monteverde's *Orfeo* very poorly executed). At the Closerie, where we stop a moment, we see at a table in the rear a residue of *Vers et Prose*** gathered around Paul Fort and his wife, B. R., and several others unknown to me. Handshakes. R. begins an enormous compliment directed at me: "I thank you, Gide . . . I thank you for the beautiful pages of *Vers et Prose* that you permitted us to read." Nothing is so silly as the expression of a man who is being complimented. One must avoid it. And as he insists, quoting me: *I don't know where to place in my sentence this monstrous toad. . . ." I interrupt him abruptly with: "Well, I am glad it has found a place in your mouth." It came out in spite of me.[12]

For the past three days I have been packing my books with the enthusiasm of a vandal. AJS my bookshelves progressively empty themselves I feel my brain being aired out. At one and the same time I feel the intoxication, of a sort of havoc and the joy, as I arrange the books in their baskets, of neatness and precision, of ingenious juxtaposition.

1

March
Finally I am back again at my work, and nothing separates me from it any longer. Finished, yesterday and this morning, bringing my correspondence up to date. Began piano-practice again. Received my writing-paper. Received the copies of *Amyntas.***

2

March
Read Hugo's astonishing essay on Voltaire.

[11] *Vers et Prose,* a literary quarterly edited by the poet Paul Fort from

1905 until 1914, was founded to publish the works of the surviving members
of the symbolist movement and their disciples. Such writers as Maeterlinck,
Verhaeren, Barres, R6gnier, Claudel, Jammes, Moreas, Louys, and Gourmont
appeared regularly in its pages, and it contributed to the discovery of younger
writers like Guillaume Apollinaire, Jules Remains, and Georges DuhameL
The following writings of Gide were published in *Vers et Prose: Bou Saada*
(1905); *Alger* (1906); *Poesies <FAndr£ Walter* (reprint, 1907); *Le Retour*
*de fenfant prodigue (*1907); *Beth$ab6 (*1909); *Feuittes de route* 1895-1896
(from the *Journals)* (1911); *Proserpine* (1912).

[12] Gide's description of the toad occurs in his *Alger,* published in the
fourth issue of *Vers et Prose,* which had just appeared. In French "to swallow
a toad** means "to pocket an insult/*

[13] The volume *Amyntas,* published by the Mercure de France in 1906,
contained *"Mopsus" "Feutiles de route'"* ("Leaves Gathered by the Way-
side")» *"De Biskra & Touggourt"* and *"Le Renonoement au voyage"*